EDITORIAL

Welcome to the first issue of ASGARD NEWS. Introductions are in order - my name is Chris Bobbitt and I'm the editor of this publication. The contributers to this magazine include some of the more glowing luminaries of the TI community (or at least the ones with the loudest voices), as well as experts in the many areas of interest that 4A owners have in their computer.

If you leaf through this issue you'll probably come to the conclusion that the emphasis of ASGARD NEWS is more on the ASGARD and less on the NEWS. You'd be right of course - at least for this issue. In the coming issues we'll cover Asgard Software products no more or less then they are covered in other TI magazines. I'm not trying to hide the fact that Asgard Software is one of the largest manufacturers of TI software as well as the publisher of this magazine. However, this fact isn't always relevent to the most important news of the day, the most important issues facing TI owners, and the things you most want to know about TI hardware and software. This magazine is BY Asgard, not ABOUT it.

This magazine is devoted to discussing the really important issues - and we'll try to examine them from all sides. We'll solicit articles from anyone with a clear stand on the questions of the day - whether I agree with them or not. The aim of this magazine isn't to shape opinion, merely to provide a forum where partisans can present their opinions, and then you, the informed reader, can make a judgement for yourself.

ASGARD NEWS is also a news magazine. We won't give you all the news (it's hard to be timely in a quarterly format), only the most important - who's in, who's out, what's up and what's down. The kind of information you'd spend many hours and dollars aquiring elsewhere.

We'll also dissect the latest in new hardware - as well as re-examine old friends. We'll help you find new uses for what you have and explore the BENEFITS of new hardware, not bore you with reams of statistics and incomprehensible feature lists.

Finally, we'll focus periodically on software with tutorials on 99/4A standards like TI-Writer. We would like to help you get more out of your 99/4A software too.

In short, ASGARD NEWS will be a news magazine that will keep you informed, and perhaps outrage, teach and even entertain you with every issue.

What are we NOT? We aren't in the business of reviewing software (it would be unethical for us to pass judgement on our competitors software). We are also a magazine of USERS, not PROGRAMMERS. Most likely you'll never see a computer language tutorial, much less a program within these pages (unless it's related to a tutorial on a piece of software). We won't tell you how to fix your hardware or software either. This is a magazine for people who don't know one end of a soldering iron from another - and don't want to let that stand in the way of enjoying their computer.

We hope you'll enjoy this magazine too.

THIS ISSUE...

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And more.

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Publication Information

ASGARD NEWS invites readers to write and comment on anything published. Letters recieved will be published "as is" if they meet Asgard Publishing's standards for good taste and relevance. No editing will be done to the content of letters, and letters that are too lengthy will not be published unless the author gives us written permission to edit the letter.

NEW PRODUCTS

Because it is our policy - we are constantly introducing new products for the TI-99/4A. This is the first of a regular column which will describe these new products. Address all specific questions or orders to:

ASGARD SOFTWARE
BOX 10306
ROCKVILLE, MD 20850

ARTIST BORDERS #1: Putting borders around TI-Artist pictures is difficult if not impossible to those of us that aren't artistically inclined. This unique, new package of 40 pre-made borders changes all of that. With Artist Borders, by Robert Coffey, TI-Artist or Font Writer II users can easily and quickly put austere to very elaborate borders around any screen or page. Now you can easily create certificates, awards, fancy pictures, or brush up graphs and charts with just a few keystrokes. Extensively documented - even the smallest child (or average adult) can easily and quickly use these borders to put the final touch on any project. Available on disk. Requires TI-Artist 2.0+ or Font Writer II. Suggested retail $7.95. All borders by Robert Coffey Jr.

CASSETTE LABELLER: This program isn't a database, yet it will help you organize your audio or computer tape collection more quickly and easily then you ever dreamed possible. How? This innovative program will print a detailed cassette box insert that lists the contents of both sides of your cassette as well as provides a clear spine-title for easy reference. This useful program will even let you save cassette box inserts for later editing. Requires Epson or Compatible printer and Extended BASIC. Available on disk or cassette. Suggested retail $7.95. By Thomas Wynne.

THE HAUNTED MINE II: This unique arcade game by John Behnke (author of TOD Editor, Missile Wars, The Volcano Fortress and others) guarrantees hours of joystick-bending action. Set in an abandoned mine (which is occupied by some pretty nasty ghosts), you have to descend to the bottom of the mine, collect gold, swing on ropes, climb latters, find latterns, avoid quicksand, and generally enjoy yourself. Great graphics and original theme music and sound effects make this a must for any game player. Available on disk by itself for $6.95, or with Missile Wars (also by John Behnke) for $9.95.

CALENDAR MAKER 99: A totally unique new approach to calendars! There are plenty of programs for the TI-99/4A that allow you to calculate and print calendars - either for a schedule or for personal use (in the former catagory our SCHEDULE MANAGER is well known), but nothing like Calendar Maker 99. This program is designed to make calendars not so much a utilitarian device as an art form.

What do we mean by this? CM99 is designed to allow you to create large, personalized picture calendars on a 99/4A! You can create a calendar for any month or year between 1600 and 2400, and put small TI-Artist pictures and blocks of text (up to 89 characters) on any day. You can also define the border style and all the typefaces used in your printout. Finally, you can have a 1-13 line message at the bottom of the page (either 49 or 98 characters per line depending upon the width of the font chosen), and put a large, detailed picture that YOU can create yourself at the top of the page.

CM99 is fast, friendly, well-documented, and most importantly, produces quite quickly a very large, detailed calendar that you can hang on your wall, give to your friends, pupils or business aquaintences. Calendar Maker 99 is useful for the teacher, home maker, PTA group (or any other volunteer organization), or business that wants to create beautiful calendars that won't be thrown away, without the cost of typesetting and printing a calendar.

Calendar Maker 99 comes on 2 disks with a 20 page manual, requires 32K, a disk drive, TI Extended BASIC (or a Myarc Geneve 9640), and an Epson/Star/TI Panasonic or compatible printer. It is available for $19.95. By: Chris Bobbitt and Ed Johnson (co-author of Legends).

BEYOND VIDEO CHESS: Are you a Video Chess fanatic or just like to play an occasional game? Are you frustrated by the limitations of the program - never save games because you have to save cassette, etc.?? Then Harry Wilhelm, the author of EZ-KEYS has a solution for you - Beyond Video Chess!

Beyond Video Chess isn't a replacement for the module - it's an enhancement. For the first time, you can now save or load a game to disk, use the joystick to move the pieces around, get a screen-dump of your game at any time, and even list your moves to your printer! BYC is for the serious chess player - or someone who'd like to be.

BVC makes TI's Video Chess game almost new again. Video Chess, after all these years, is still the premier chess program for the TI-99/4A - none others even come close to it's capability and ease of use. It is also one of the largest modules ever made by TI if not THE largest. BYC allows you to play the game like you never played it.

The program requires 32K, a single disk drive, and one of the following hardware configurations: a Navarone Widget and Editor/Assembler, A Horizon RAM-disk, a Myarc or Corcomp Disk Controller or a Load-Interrupt switch (from Corcomp or various others) and the Editor/Assembler module. An Epson or compatible printer and a joystick is recommended. Written in 100% assembly language. Suggested retail $9.95.

New Versions

While new programs are always of interest to people - most everyone would like to see improvements in the programs they know and use. Asgard Software realizes this, and we provide incentives to our authors to improve and refine existing programs.
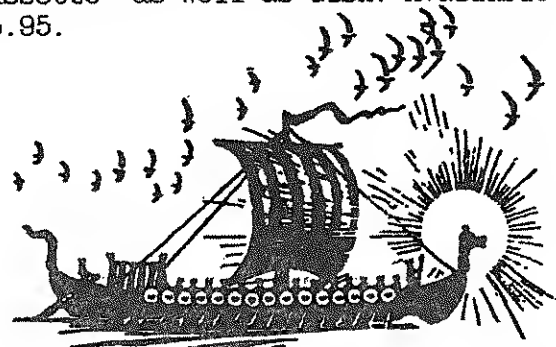
Now available are the following updates and media converions:

LEGENDS 1.1 - This update to our very popular animated graphics adventure includes a Save Game function, multiple attacks, new spells and potions, and many small improvements. This version also corrects several bugs found in the previous one. To obtain the update return the original disks and $5.00 for non-registered owners, $3.00 for those that returned their warranty cards.

HIGH GRAVITY 2.3 - This program hasn't made a lot of noise, but it has slowly become more and more popular in the last year. The latest version features even more improvements. It now offers a built-in disk cataloging function (useful for recalling saved games), and accepts key commands in lower as well as upper case. The update can be obtained by returning your original disk and $3.00.

DOOM GAMES I - Now available on cassette! This popular package of games for the Tunnels of Doom (tm) module is now more available then ever. This version is the same price as the diskette version - $7.95.

MISSILE WARS - This game by John Behnke is a terrific rendition of the popular Missile Command. Now available on cassette as well as disk. Available for $5.95.

Reduced Prices
On Classic Software!

Asgard Software is pleased to announce we have reduced the suggested retail price of our popular SCHEDULE MANAGER. This revolutionary program, which originally retailed for $29.95, contains a 4-month appointment book (with up to a full-screen of appointments for each day entered with a TI-Writer-like editor), a 30-page notebook where you can store phone numbers and the like and move them into the appointment-book as needed, and a calendar with reminder function. It also allows you to print your appointments a day or a week at a time. SCHEDULE MANAGER also features a help-menu, pull-down menus, and pop-up windows. Includes a detailed 24 page manual. Now available for only $9.95! Requires XB, 32K and disk.

We would also like to announce that we are now shipping SCREEN SCROLL PACKAGE, our package of assembly routines for Extended BASIC including commented source code, with the book Introduction to Assembly Language for the TI Home Computer (a $17.95 value!) - both for only $9.95! If you've wanted to learn assembly language - now is your chance. Requires XB, 32K and Disk.

Finally, BALLOON WARS, a 20-screen original arcade/strategy game in which you are invited to fly a balloon over the Sahara while avoiding soldiers and tanks on the ground, is now available for 50% off until August only - only $4.95. Requires XB, 32K and Disk.

Bug Report

It is axiomatic that no matter how well-tested a program is before it is released, the really obvious bugs in it won't be found until afterwards. Acknowledging that fact, this column is dedicated to helping you eradicate those pests in your favorite Asgard Software programs.

Only two bugs have been drawn to our attention in the last month. The first is found in our EZ-KEYS. Harry Wilhelm,

the author, notes that under certain circumstances, the character redefined to be the copyright symbol in the title screen can interfere with the proper usage of the program. While this was fixed in the most recently shipped, many people received the version with the error. To fix it load in the program LOAD and edit line 120 which in the unfixed version will read:

        120 CALL CLEAR :: CALL CHAR(
        64,"3C4299A1A199423C"):: DIS
        PLAY AT(8,3):"E-Z KEYS LOADE
        R & SAVER" :: DISPLAY AT(10,
        4):"@1987 by Harry Wilhelm"

Change it to read:

        120 CALL CLEAR :: CALL CHAR(
        99,"3C4299A1A199423C"):: DIS
        PLAY AT(8,3):"E-Z KEYS LOADE
        R & SAVER" :: DISPLAY AT(10,
        4):"c1987 by Harry Wilhelm"

This should fix any problems. The other bug is not so much a bug as an incompatibility problem. Font Writer II was designed specifically on a Gemini 10X. It will work fine with most Star and all Epson printers. However, some printers are only "semi"-compatible with the Epson - specifically the Panasonic printers. If the thing was 100% compatible, it' be an Epson, right? In any case, the problem found is that invariably when using Font Writer II with a Panasonic printer, the first line of your printout will come out bad. The way around this is to make the first line in your text file a blank line, or to print a sample line and force a form-feed (by pressing FCTN 9) and have it start your printout at the top of the next page.

That's it for the Bug Report this issue - send all your questions and comments to:

ASGARD PUBLISHING
BOX 10697
ROCKVILLE, MD 20850

Ask Asgard

This is a new column, which eventually will be filled with questions from readers of this journal. Until we have some, though, let's answer some of the most commonly asked questions received in Asgard Software's mail:

Q: Font Writer II crashes whenever I try to access any of the options of the main menu - is it defective?

A: No - turn on your printer before using the program.

Q: Why don't you make your graphics printing programs work with Prowriter or Okidata printers?

A: Over 98% of all dot-matrix printers sold today are Epson/IBM compatible. Unfortunately, the 2% who don't buy them seem to be mostly 99/4A owners. Seriously - we have to write programs for the majority of our audience. Besides, none of our authors have Prowriter or Okidata printers.

Q: Can EZ-Keys be used with TI-Artist, PRBase or other all assembly programs that load through Extended BASIC?

A: No - these programs take over a machine and won't let any other program run at the same time.

Q: How come my programs don't want to run on the 9640 when you say they are compatible?

A: Most likely, you've set the GPL Interpreter speed too high. Many programs, particularly assembly ones or those with screen graphics or both, can't run at the maximum speed of 5. Keep it at 3 to be most compatible without being dreadfully slow.

Q: When does this column end?

A: Right now... till next issue!

Program Focus

This column is dedicated to explaining those programs we offer whose usefulness isn't immediately obvious to many people. The focus this month will be on Recipe Writer, by Warren Agee.

No, to use this program you DON'T have to drag your computer into the kitchen! This program doesn't make your computer into a cooking appliance, instead it is an organization tool for your recipes.

Everyone is familiar with grand-ma's card-file full of goodies - that metal box she would keep her secret instructions for preparing all manner of delights. This program allows you to replace the box with the warm glow of your computer monitor.

Recipe Writer allows you to re-type (yes - you HAVE to type a bunch of recipes in before it's good for anything!) all your favorites into the computer. The advantage? Well, for one - making copies is as easy as duplicating a disk. For another thing, you can replace a big stack of cards with a much smaller stack of disks (126 recipes per disk). Finally, it's more conveniant to have the computer rummage through your list for a particular recipe then for you to squint at poorly lettered index cards on your kitchen table.

Recipe Writer also will let you print out recipes on 3x5 cards or regular paper, as well as convert a recipe to different serving sizes. It's fast (compiled into assembly from c99), and easy to use. It includes a substantial manual.

How does it work in the real world? Well, I've personally types in several disks worth of recipes, and I've found that about 99% of them will fit on the 50 or so 40 column lines provided for the instructions, title, keywords and ingrediant list. Those that won't I'd probably never cook anyway - they are too long. It's not a cheap program - it's $19.95 - but programmers have to eat too.

FEATURE ARTICLE
An Introspective Look at the Myarc Geneve 9640 Part I

By Chris Bobbitt

Before I get into this, let me just say that the purpose of this article is not to make you want to run out and buy a Geneve. I´m not trying to convince you that the 9640 is the best thing since sliced bread. I´m not even saying it is for most people. The purpose of this article is to lay to rest some of the misconceptions widely repeated about the computer - and the apprehension some people in the 99/4A community have greeted it with.

The Myarc Geneve 9640 (as unwieldy a name as anything TI ever thought of) is a computer on a card that looks just like any other card for the 99/4A. It is not an enhancement for the 99/4A, but instead it is a direct replacement that happens to run 99/4A software. When you are using it, you are not using a computer by TI (even though in the TI mode it is virtually indistinguishable), but instead one by Myarc. You install it by putting it in slot 1 of the Peripheral Expansion box (or equivalent), after removing the Expansion Box interface card (the "firehouse"). At his point, you can connect your 99/4A to another box and/or monitor, and use it as a second computer (or a third for many of us). The 9640 is compatible with most cards designed for use with the 99/4A - the only exceptions seem to be all 32K and memory cards, and perhaps the Corcomp Triple Tech. The only "memory" card that seems to function with it is the Horizon RAM-Disk - other RAM-disk cards have to be converted for use with the machine, and information how is not available at this time.

When you have plugged in this computer-on-a-card, attached the keyboard (which is a standard IBM keyboard), a TI or compatible joystick (ports 1 and 2 were accidentally switched on the joystick port when the machine was designed - so if you are like me and have a single Atari joystick converter you have to get one of those WICO two-joystick interfaces), and your monitor to the plugs on the back of the machine, you have a completely new computer. Additionally, there is a fourth socket available for attaching a mouse or any other pointing device you can think of. Your console is completely out of the picture - as mentioned above you can set it up elsewhere and have the only true multi-tasking system possible - two computers in the same room!

The major question in the TI community is exactly what kind of beast IS the Geneve? In my opinion, it is the legitimate heir to the 99/4A - primarily because it is so similar to the ACTUAL heir - the never-released TI-99/8. The 9640 and the 99/8 share the same microprocessor - the TMS9995. This processor is mostly a newer, somewhat improved version of the 9900 found in the 99/4A that is 3 to 5 times faster in most aspects. Like the 9900 it is a 16-bit chip (though to argue it strongly is to open a can of technical worms that is way beyond the scope of this article). Suffice to say, it is the processor of choice for ANY 99/4A upgrade - primarily beause it is cheap and fast.

Both the 99/8 and the 9640 have at least two-modes of operation. Both machines have a "99/4A mode" as well as a "native" mode. The "native" mode in each case is included so the user and programmer can utilize the one major enhancement found in both the 9640 and the 99/8 that a 99/4A mode cannot - additional memory. In the 99/8´s case the native mode allowed the use of 64K of RAM (expandable to 1Mb), while the 9640 comes with 512K (expandable to 2Mb). The "native" mode operating systems of the 99/8 and the 9640 are substantially different, but NEITHER of them is compatible with the "99/4A mode" of either machine.

The 99/8 also has a third mode, which is essentially the contents of the P-Code card available for the 99/4A. The software to provide this for the

9640 is not available at this time – but long promised.

The one major difference between the 9640 and the 99/8 (beyond memory limitations and a few software differences) is the choice of graphics processors. The 99/8 uses the same graphics chip found in the 99/4A – the TMS9918A (part of the "A" in 99/4A). The 9640 uses the successor to the 9918, also designed by TI (but years after the 99/8 was designed, in 1986) – the 9938. While both are designed by TI, the 9938 is actually not manufactured by TI – but instead by Yamaha of Japan. The paranoid reason it is not manufactured by TI is that TI has been doing everything in it's power to divorce itself from the 99/4A – including disavowing any chips found in the 4A. The real reason is that the 9938 has much more of a market in Japan then it does over here because the 9918A was the graphics chip of choice in Japan for many years – millions of Japanese computers never seen in the U.S. use it (including the Coleco Adam which WAS, unfortunately, seen here).

As graphics chips go, the 9938 is probably the major reason outside of additional memory and speed for buying the 9640. While the 9918A provided stunning graphics for it's day, the 9938 is a quantum leap above the 9918A. How so is actually for part II of this article. For right now, all you need to know is that it provides graphics comparable to those found in other modern-day computers, while retaining 100% compatibility with the 9918A found in the 99/4A and 99/8.

I'm going out on a limb now, but I firmly believe that if TI designed a home computer today, hardware-wise it would be almost the same as the Geneve, primarily beause the Geneve is quite similar to what TI did in the 99/8. The reasons why are simple – the 99/8 is a good starting place for any 99/4A upgrade, and the guy who runs Myarc is a former TI hardware designer who was very involved in designing 99/4A projects for TI.

The software differences between the

99/8 and the 9640 are a whole different story, though.

As stated above, both the 99/8 and the 9640 have a "99/4A" mode and a "native" mode. In both cases, the 99/4A mode is about 99% compatible with an actual 99/4A. Why not 100% compatible? The reason why is it is simply impossible to have something be compatible with the 99/4A and be much faster at the same time.

To digress a little: like in cars, timing is very important to computers. Timing is important when you try to read from a disk drive, write to the screen, read the keyboard, or in any other task commonly performed by the computer (even getting data from memory!). If you try to make one part of the computer work faster (IE the microprocessor or the memory) you have to make the other parts go faster as well, or the net effect is a speedup in only some operations, while as a whole the system isn't a heck of a lot faster. It's kind of like two dancers, if one partner dances faster, the other one better dance faster too or he or she will get their feet stepped on!

The problem comes in not finding ways to speed up the system, but how to do it and not throw every program that depends on how the system is timed out of whack. A few programs depend on things working at a given speed or they won't work. While the numbers are small, the importance of them isn't – these programs include the 99/4A operating system, BASIC and Extended BASIC! The problem with timing is further intensified because of the greatest asset, and disadvantage of the 99/4A, GROM.

GROM is an advantage in the 99/4A because it allows you to cram a lot of stuff into a small space. How? Essentially GROM (or GRAM – the RAM version of GROM), can be easily paged. The memory in the 99/4A is divided into 8K blocks. Up to 64K of GRAM or GROM can be placed at any one of those 8K block locations. This means, for example, that any module plugged into a 99/4A can effectively be up to 64K in

size (64K Supercart anyone?). That is why the 99/4A has 144K of memory in the console when a 16-bit machine can only directly access 64K of it normally. This was really advanced stuff back in 1979 when it was designed. The only problem with GROM (or GRAM) is that using it is tricky, and it is very timing dependant.

Hence, the major problem facing ANYONE (TI, Myarc, Corcomp, et all) that wants to design a 99/4A upgrade is to overcome these timing problems and retain 99/4A compatibility, while not making the machine as slow as a 99/4A!

TI faced it with the 99/8, and Myarc has successfully faced the problem with the 9640. However, in order to do it Myarc had to make some tradeoffs - the Myarc Geneve isn't nearly as fast as it could be if it lost the "baggage" of 99/4A compatibility - but that ignores the whole point of the machine in the first place - a faster 99/4A.

So the Geneve has two modes of operation and we know about the 4A mode, but what about the other? The other "native" mode - often called M-DOS mode (after it's operating system) is the mode that can take advantage of one thing that the 99/4A mode will never be able to well - the additional memory. M-DOS is not the best operating system in the world. In fact, the operating system it is patterned after (MS-DOS on IBM's and compatibles) is one that I have a deep seated dislike for. MS-DOS is not only stupid, it's also obsolete. When it was designed it was a 20 year-old program running on 10 year-old technology (the original IBM PC). Comparing it to the sophistication and elegence of the 99/4A operating system is like comparing slam-dancing to ballet.

Fortunately for the Geneve, it is nothing internally like MS-DOS (which is also why an operating system that has all the stupid problems associated with MS-DOS and runs on a machine as fast as an IBM PC AT can't run Lotus 1-2-3!). It really can't be like MS-DOS on the inside - MS-DOS is designed for the misbegotten Intel

80xxx line of processors, which are still around 10 years behind the concepts embodied in the 9900 family (which, believe it or not, Intel's engineers are starting to realize).

This, of course, is all beside the point. M-DOS is designed to allow programmers (currently, only assembly ones) to take advantage of the extra memory, graphics and speed afforded by the 9640. The 9640 is faster in it's native mode then when it is pretending to be a 99/4A (in fact, most benchmarks written for the native mode place it at about the same speed as a 68000 processor running at 8Mhz - essentially a Commodore Amiga, Atari ST or Apple Mac - or your average 32-bit processor). What takes advantage of all the speed and power afforded by this machine? Currently, very little. Unless Myarc starts supporting developers, it's likely to remain this way.

The "M-DOS" mode has been the subject of intense scrutiny and criticism of Myarc. However, in a way, this is all air. The point of the Geneve was to provide a 99/4A compatible machine that was faster then a 99/4A - the 9640 does this as well as TI's own computer did! It also adds 80-column capability not available in the 99/8 (except as an add-on card which was planned but never actually constructed). In a way, the 9640's operating system, or one of them (the 99/4A one), has been done for the last year! M-DOS, or the operating system that is supposed to take advantage of all the new features of the 9640, has gradually evolved over this time - but who needs it?

It is quite possible to use the Geneve as simply a faster 99/4A with an IBM PS/2-like keyboard, an 80-column card, and a built-in RAM-disk. If you were to buy the Mechatronics 80-column card, a RAVE keyboard, a Myarc 128K RAM-disk and a 16-bit 32K console enhancement it would cost a LOT more then the $480 Myarc 9640 (around $400 more!), it STILL would be slower (around 1/2 as fast), STILL not run Advanced Diagnostics (which would probably hang-up over the faster RAM just as it does on the 9640), and STILL not

include free an 80-column Multiplan and TI-Writer. Of course, as a 99/4A the Geneve suffers the same memory limitation. But, if you don't mind the memory limitations of your 4A, why would you mind the same ones on the Geneve?

In summary, the Geneve offers most of the same hardware as found in the 99/8, and actually more memory and a superior graphics chip. It is a complete replacement for the 99/4A that offers a high-degree of 99/4A compatibility – approximently the same level provided by TI's own upgrade. It has two modes of operation with 2-3 time speed improvement over the 99/4A in the 99/4A mode, and a "native" or "M-DOS" mode that is even faster.

In the next installment in this column, we'll examine the 9938 graphics chip, and go a little more in-depth into the 99/4A mode of operation, and some of it's advantages over a standard 99/4A.

Miscellaneous Stuff

This section of ASGARD NEWS is devoted, of course, to those things that really quite don't fit elsewhere but are related to Asgard Software in some direct manner (or have nothing to do with Asgard but are interesting).

NEWSLETTER MAKING SOFTWARE AVAILABLE

In case you had any doubts – this newsletters was generated entirely on a TI-99/4A computer with an Epson printer. While the text was generated with TI-Writer, it sure wasn't printed with it! It was printed with a program we like to call the QUICK AND DIRTY FORMATTING COLUMNIZER. This little program takes a 40-column wide file, formats it (will let you add titling and such), justifies it, and then prints it out. It comes in two versions – one sufficiantly general that it can be modified easily for any printer, and another optimized for the Epson LX and LQ line of printers. You can obtain a copy of this program (It's FREE!) by mailing us a disk and a $3.00 copy and return-postage fee.

PRINT HELP FOR GEMINI USERS

Do you have a Star printer? To be more to the point – do you get ugly white horizontal lines on your screen dumps of GRAPHX or TI-Artist pictures? You don't have to suffer these blithely – there is a simple solution.

The problem lies in the fact that the Gemini printers have a different line-height then the Epson's they are modelled on (and all the software is written for!). You can change the line-height, at least for as long as you leave the printer on, with the following short BASIC program that you should load and execute prior to using any graphics program not explicitly designed for the Star printers. Transcribe the following in TI BASIC:

```
10 INPUT "TURN ON PRINTER AN
D PRESS    ENTER..":A$
20 OPEN #1:"PIO",OUTPUT
30 PRINT #1:CHR$(27);"A";CHR
$(6)
```

40 CLOSE #1

There! Now, once you've typed this in, save it to your each graphics program disk as SETUPPROG or somesuch. Run it before running your program, and your problem is solved. Note, you may want to reset (IE turn off and on again) your printer prior to printing any letters or reports - otherwise your text will be squinched up.

GIF TRANSLATER SUPPORTS BATCH FILES

For our 9640 users... Paul Charlton's widely used GIF Translator has an additional feature not previously mentioned - that is that it can accept a text file argument on loading. For example, you can create a text file TEST/BAT containing the following commands:

```
USE SAMPLE/GIF
LEFT 64
UP 28
DISPLAY
```

Then, when running the program (say it is named GIFEXE on your program disk) you would type:

```
A> GIFEXE TEST/BAT <enter>
```

When the GIF translator loads it will automatically execute the contents of the file TEST/BAT. This feature can be used to make a crude sort of slideshow function.

By the way, of the hundreds of people that use the GIF Translator, Paul told me that fewer then 10 have bothered to donate anything - while 60% of 9640 owners have bought My-Art (which is somewhat less enjoyable to use if you aren't artistically inclined). Send a donation TODAY.

The News

A lot of things happen in the TI community each month but unfortunately MICROpendium only has so much space to print them. This column is devoted to those things that others missed.

DATABIOTICS PRODUCTS OUT SOON

Sources in Databiotics have reported that they intend to start shipping copies of their Desktop Publisher by April 1st (no joke!). The program isn't as sophisticated as the one they advertised, and is primarily of interest to console owners only since several disk-based programs are superior, but should increase interest in 99/4A graphics applications. Databiotics shipped 8 or so Grand-RAM cards a few weeks ago, but errors found in the cards have lengthened the time before the item will be widely available. Databiotics intends to honor all orders for the Grand-RAM - even those at the now obscenely low original price (obscene because the price of RAM chips has skyrocketed in the last few months - the card now costs more then the price originally charged to make!)

TEXAMENTS CANCELS TURBO PASCAL

Texaments has released it's spring catalog, and Turbo Pasc' 99 is missing from it's pages. A few calls revealed that apparantly there were some legal problems with the language on the German end (where it was originally developed). The story goes that the software was originally liscensed from the author by another German firm, which liscensed it to Texaments. The German firm went bankrupt. Now that the lawyers have sunk their teeth into it - we probably won't see it until 1993! Let's hope Texaments hangs in there - their TI-Artist line is really essential software for all 4A'ers.

NEW VERSION OF FORTRAN 99

LGMA Products (Box 210, RD4, Applebutter Hill Rd., Coopersburg, PA 18036) has released version 3.0 of it's 99 Fortran. It now includes an expanded subroutine library, program chaining, and many other items (including a generic run-time module). While Fortran IV - the basis for Fortran 99 - is not the best language to develop programs in (it doesn't support character strings, for instance) it is ideal for many types of applications, is

reasonably fast, and a billion man-hours of source-code is available for it. The upgrade is $15, and the item can be purchased for $49.95.

QUICK N' DIRTY M-DOS EDITOR AVAILABLE

Clint Pulley has recently released his QDE editor. Since it runs solely out of the M-DOS mode of the 9640, it is the first text-editor for the 9640! It allows up to 557 80-character lines in memory, and supports many of TI-Writer's editing functions. It can be obtained from Compuserve, GEnie, Delphi, numerous BBS's, and probably by sending a disk and a return mailer to Clint himself (38 Townsend Ave., Burlington, Ontario L7T 1Y6). You may want to send a donation too, but he mentioned that the program is public domain. Rumor has it that a 9640 version of c99 is just around the corner. Since this editor is written in c99 - I find that very easy to believe!

TELCO 2.0

By the time you read this Charles Earl will have released Version 2.0 of his phenomenal Telco terminal emulator. The most feature-packed terminal emulator of them all, 2.0 will add script file capability, PC Pursuit support, many small bug-fixes from 1.3, and a number of oft requested small changes such as a sound at the end of downloads, a duplex setting in the autodialer (great for GEnie users), etc. If you haven't sent $20 to Charles by now, and use the program, you should have your computer taken away from you! However, to date Charles has been pleased with the response (over 40 people sent donations from the United States versus about 2 from Canada so far) and plans to continue updating the program. He is also working on other applications too. Since Telco is his first program - I wonder what kind of stuff he will be writing in a few years?

GENIAL TRAVELLER AND SMART PROGRAMMER RECEIVED

Volume 2 number 1 of Genial Traveller disk-a-zine and Vol. 2 No. 9 of The Smart Programmer both came in the mail this week. While neither seem to be on a regular schedule, both of them are, as usual, jam-packed with information. The latest Genial Traveller even has several new macros for use in our own EZ-Keys!

KEY NOTES PLANNED

Key Notes, the very successful newsletter for EZ-Keys owners will hit the streets by the time you read this. The next issue will contain several useful new macros, and information about an incredible new version.

MYARC HARD DISK DELAYS

Despite MICROpendium's glowing announcement of the release of the Myarc Hard/Floppy controller card, there have been several other delays in the software for the thing. Evidently the hardware end of things has been ready for quite a while. Quite a bit more expensive then originally planned (if they had released it at the originally planned street price of $200 they would have undoubtably blown Corcomp away!), many people are still planning to purchase it. Sources inside the hard-disk manufacturing industry indicate that there is going to be an incredible glut of hard-drives by the end of the year (17 million will be manufactured and only 12 million purchased) - if you hold out till then you can probably set up 3 80Mb hard drives and the controller with power supply for well under $1000! We're in no hurry to get the card around here...

AEInc CANCELS AMOS

Access Engineering Inc. has cancelled it's AMOS multi-tasking operating system in the wake of TI's recent decision to support the 990 mini-computer market again - after a 3 year hiatus. Evidently, TI woke up to the fact the 990 computer owners weren't migrating elsewhere, and a strong market for a new 990 computer existed. Unfortunately, this is the same market AEInc. had planned to sell to. More information will be available when AEInc sends out it's summer press release.

FUNLPLUS 2.0 AVAILABLE

Version 2.0 of Jack Sughrue's FunlPlus environment is now available. Based on the popular Funnelwriter, Funlplus contains mini-utilities for printing labels, cataloging disks, dump text to the screen, design letterheads and so on. It also has dozens of templates, printer format graphics, tutorials on using the formatter, and other files. This is the complete TI-Writer compendium combined with the highly functional Funnelwriter environment - a real productivity tool. For more information write to Jack Sughrue, Box 459, E. Douglas, MA 01516.

NEXT ISSUE

The Next issue of ASGARD NEWS will have a continuation of the series on the Myarc Geneve, the complete scoop on the status of Picasso and who will be selling what how when and where, as well as more inside news from the 99/4A and 9640 software and hardware industry.

Genial TRAVelER

The Genial TRAVelER is a magazine on a disk for the TI-99/4A, providing more then 700 sectors of programs and articles in each issue. The "diskazine", edited by Barry Traver, has featured articles and programs from numerous TI luminaries over the past 2 years.

GT is also inexpensive: you get a six-issue subscription for only $36 (less then a penny per sector!). Recent articles have even included reviews of Asgard's TOD Editor and EZ-Keys sample files. If you would like to subscribe send a check for $36 for Volumes #1 or #2, or $65 for both. Send to:

Genial TRAVelER
835 Green Valley Dr.
Philadelphia, PA 19128

Specify volume when ordering.

Current Versions...

This "column" is designed to help you keep informed about updates for all Asgard products that you own. The version number of your software will be noted in the program's title screen.

Program	Vers.	Last Updt.
Balloon Wars	1.15	1/1/86
High Gravity	2.1	5/1/88
Legends	1.1	4/1/88
Missile Wars	1.0	n/a
The Haunted Mine	1.0	n/a
Doom Games I	1.0	n/a
The Volcano Fortress	1.0	n/a
Artist Enlarger	1.0	n/a
Font Writer II	2.0	8/15/87
GRAPHX Slideshow	1.0	n/a
Recipe Writer 2.0	2.0	5/1/87
Schedule Manager	1.2	4/15/87
Stamp Manager	1.1	5/1/86
Total Filer	1.0	n/a
EZ-Keys+	2.0	5/15/88
Music Synthesizer	1.1	11/1/86
Pre-Scan It!	1.1	10/1/86
Screen Scroll Pckg.	1.0	n/a
TOD Editor	3.0	3/1/87

If one of your programs has been updated, for information about availibity and cost write to:

Asgard Software
P.O. Box 10306
Rockville, MD 20850
301-559-2429

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